Defence Production by Government vis-a-vis Private Units

†2007. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether defence establishments would be able to compete with private sector after their participation in defence production;

(b) the details of the efforts being made by Government to protect the defence establishments;

(c) how the quality of defence production would be regulated after private participation; and

(d) the safeguards against the practice of Commission adopted by private sector for selling their products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) and (b) A formidable public sector defence industry consisting of 39 Ordnance Factories and 8 Public Sector Undertakings, with a combined turn-over of nearly Rs. 14000 crores exists in India and would remain as the Core Sector. It is expected to grow further alongwith the private sector in healthy competition.

(c) The products manufactured by the private sector would be subjected to the same quality checks as applicable to the Ordnance Factories and Defence Public Sector Units.

(d) Various safeguards are already in place to ensure that Commissions are not paid in the sale of Defence products.

Danger of cities of Punjab due to Ammunition Depots

2008. DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news-item captioned "Punjab cities sit on a tinder box" which appeared in the Hindu dated the 5th June, 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that the lives of thousands living in three cities of Punjab viz. Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Bhathinda could be in

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

peril if any accident of fire occurs at any of the ammunition depots; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to avoid any such eventuality?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) to (c) The news items published in the Hindu dated 5th June, 2001 has been perused. The Ordnance Depots were originally located away from the urban cities. Over the years, the towns have expanded and now some of the depots are surrounded by urban habitation. These depots were sited after taking into account logistic and strategic requirements of the Army.

The Government is aware of the location of Ordnance Depots around which encroachments have taken place which includes the Depots located near Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Bathinda. These encorachments have, however, came up in violation of Indian Works of Defence Act, 1903 which stipulates that restrictions should be imposed on the use of land in the vicinity of any works of Defence and that such land be kept free from buildings and other obstructions for reasons of security of the establishments. Adequate measures are being taken by the Army authorities to prevent incidents of fire in these depots.

The following steps have been taken to protect the materials and the storage depots from future fire accidents:—

(i) All depots have been directed to update safety and security instructions.

(ii) All depots have been inspected by a Board of Officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements.

(iii) Shortages in fire fighting equipment are being made up and defective equipment repaired.

(iv) Unserviceable ammunition is being disposed off on priority.

(v) Allotment of additional funds for creation of more storage accommodation, for shifting ammunition presently stored on open plinths under canvas to Explosive Stores Houses.